
Reveries of Camp Le Rid



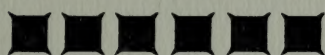
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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

Reveries
of Camp
Le Nid



To Alfred Campbell

with the sincerest
regards of

W.B. Harrington

Jan 12/12

1840

1841

1842

1843

1844

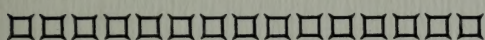
Reveries of Camp Le Nid



From Address delivered by the Chief
at Annual Meeting of the Club, 1908

H566

② Reveries of Camp De Nid



OUR Camp is pitched on historic ground. Probably no township in the Province of Ontario can boast of a history so intensely interesting as the Township of Adolphustown. It has witnessed the progress of the civilization of the Province from the time the white man first set foot in this district, and it has played no unimportant part in laying the foundations of our municipal and other institutions that contribute to the public good.

IF these old oaks, in whose shade we love to loiter, could tell the tales of their lives and all that has transpired within sight of their restless tops, we could learn then of the first white man who penetrated the wilds of Central Ontario, of the first priests who carried the Gospel to the heathen tribes along these shores, and of the struggles of the first refugees who sought a home in the wilderness of Canada rather than take up arms against the King they had been taught to revere. While these creaking limbs and fluttering leaves may whisper sweet lullabies to us in our drowsy moods, yet, I fear, they will not reveal all they know about the early pioneers. We cannot complain, for some day we may approve the same discreet silence maintained by them in respect to all they have witnessed during the past

twenty years. I shall, therefore, endeavor to act as their spokesman.

FIRST, let us cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with our beloved and charming, though sometimes boisterous friend, the Bay of Quinte. As far back as the year 1668 there was a band of Cayuga Indians encamped somewhere in this district. One authority locates this village at West Lake, and the chief reason for doing so is the fact that they are said to have crossed Lake Ontario, and this appeared the most probable landing place on the south side of Prince Edward County. Others place this village at different points between West Lake and the present site of the Murray Canal, and still another authority places it at the entrance to Hay Bay.

Whether the original village was located there or not, there seems to be no doubt that about this period a band of Cayuga Indians did, for some time, make the territory about Thompson's Point their headquarters.

THIS original village, wherever it was located, was called Kente, and it is from this name that we get the name *Quinte*. Other explanations are given as to the origin of this name. I shall recount a few. It is said that in the early days of the French occupation a Colonel Quinte, being driven from the district of Niagara, was pursued by a war-liketribetothis bay, where he and a large number of his followers perished in their efforts to escape over the treacherous ice. The French records do not disclose that any such incident occurred,

or that any such officer was upon their roll. It is claimed by others that it is derived from the Latin *quintus* (five), owing to the fact that five distinct bays are visible from the Lake-on-the-Mountain. Others, again, assert that the name had a similar derivation, owing to the existence of five Indian villages along its shores. All these theories may be dismissed, and the first explanation given by me accepted as the true origin of the name.

THE first white man to brave the dangers of an exploration through what is now the Province of Ontario was the intrepid Champlain. In 1615 he made the trip up the Ottawa, down the Trent and along this bay to the St. Lawrence River, passing within sight of this Point, and as he spent several months in this dis-

trict, it is not at all improbable that he pitched his tents upon this ground and found a welcome shelter for his batteaux in the cove where now rests at her moorings the flagship of Le Nid.

As the Bay of Quinte is to-day one of the highways from Quebec and Montreal to the western part of this Province, so it was during the early history of Canada. It was then, however, the only route, unless the objective point was farther north, then the Ottawa would be followed. Within sight of this Point, from the days of Champlain there have paraded two processions, carrying the produce of the interior to the seaside, and the same ships returning laden with merchandise. These tell the tale of the commerce of this district and the advance made in our system of navigation.

IF we could have glanced across the bay on a certain day in late October in the year 1668, we would have seen a large canoe shoot out from behind the Island. At the bow and stern were two Cayuga guides plying their paddles with that mechanical precision that characterizes all acts of labor of the Indian. Seated in the centre, with their effects tied together in a few bundles, were two young men, pale and tired, yet with a look of pious determination upon their faces. One was studying a rough chart of these waters, and pointed towards Thompson's Point, and in that direction the guides turned the prow of the canoe. These two young men were Fathers Verreau and Fenelon, the first missionaries to establish themselves among the Indians in this Province. They were seeking for the Kente village above

referred to. Father Fenelon was the moving spirit in this enterprise. He died a martyr to the noble work he had in hand, but not until he had laid a sound foundation for the mission field in Central Ontario.

SOME years later a familiar figure upon these waters was La Salle, a bright and most daring young soldier, who constructed Fort Frontenac at Kingston and made frequent trips of exploration along the bay and farther west, even to the mouth of the Mississippi River. He was the first white man to trace the "Father of Waters" to the Gulf of Mexico, the founder of Louisiana and the first man to receive from the Crown a grant of land in Canada. Amherst Island, but a few miles from here, formed a part of this seignory.

The Lake-on-the-Mountain has

always been one of the show places of camp. We never tire of visiting it nor exclaiming upon its phenomenal surroundings, and the beautiful view of the bay that may be had from its shore. One can readily conceive how much more attractive it was when the water, instead of being conducted down the hill through an iron pipe, plunged over the precipice in a beautiful cascade and formed by its action the huge cave, which is one of the wonders of this section.

IN 1796 one Captain Vanalstine conceived the idea of utilizing this power, and blasted out the present outlet and conducted the water to a flour mill built at the base of the mountain. This was the third flour mill constructed in this part of the Province. Fabulous tales are told of this Lake-on-the-Mountain in respect to its unfathom-

able depth and the strange source of its supply. During the past few years a hopeful promoter issued a prospectus based upon wild theories that were exploded long before he ever heard of such a place. Had this enterprising young man turned up a copy of the *Montreal Gazette* of 1834 he would have learned that this lake does not differ from hundreds of others in Ontario, except that it is perched upon the edge of a mountain. Its greatest depth is ninety-one feet, and its source is to be found in the immediate neighborhood.

WHILE this part of the country may be famous for its scenic beauty and for lying along the route of the early explorers, yet to all Britishers the Township of Adolphustown shall always be remembered as the original land-

ing place of the United Empire Loyalists. They sailed from New York under one Captain Vanalstine on September 8th, 1783, and arrived at Quebec on October 8th. This was the same Vanalstine who first harnessed the waters of Lake-on-the-Mountain. They spent the winter in the Lower Province, and left Sorel in a brigade of batteaux on May 21st, 1784, and landed at the present site of the village of Adolphustown on June 16th. The first name appearing upon this honor roll of pioneers after that of Captain Vanalstine is that of Peter Ruttan, the ancestor of our esteemed friend the proprietor of the land upon which we are now encamped. They pitched their tents a short distance from their landing place, and made that their temporary home until their lots were distributed among them.

SOON the axes of the new settlers were busy in the forests. We have little conception of the hardships they underwent. Bare patches soon appeared here and there, with a log cabin in the centre. The timber was gathered into huge piles and burned. The only immediate return for the labor expended in clearing these tracts was the small sum received for the potash made from the ashes. These hardy pioneers laid the foundations of the present social, political and moral structure of this township. Their influence, indeed, went much farther. Although a small township, in fact, the smallest in the Province, Adolphustown has furnished more than its quota of the men who have made the history of our country. Their voices have been heard in our educational institutions, our churches and legisla-

tive halls, and our jurisprudence has been enriched by their decrees from the bench.

THIS township may fairly claim as one of her own sons the illustrious Sir John A. Macdonald, who spent his boyhood days within sight of this point. Before the City of Toronto, as such, had found a place upon the map, Courts of General Sessions were regularly held at Adolphustown, and a short distance from the head of our bay was born the man who assisted in laying the foundation of our present system of courts, the late Judge Hagerman.

The tablets placed in the walls of the Memorial Church give the names of some of the honored dead of Adolphustown, but in the neglected cemeteries we find many more. Midway between here and Hay Bay is one of those

sacred spots. The stones are now covered with moss so near the color of the gray landscape that we cannot see them from here. Let us uncover our heads as we pay it a visit, for here lie, almost forgotten, the crumbling bones of a number of noble men and women, who demonstrated by the sacrifices they made, and the hardships they endured, that they were worthy to have their names enrolled among the heroes of our country. Probably it was their humble request that their ashes should mingle with the soil they had struggled so hard to prepare for the plow.

THE first Methodist church built in Canada was erected on the south shore of Hay Bay in 1792, and if we could climb to the topmost branch of our old oak we could see its spire, if it had one. No

such ornament ever adorned it. There were no frills, either on their meeting houses or religion, in those good old days. This old church is still fairly well preserved, but it is no credit to the great Christian body whose advent in Canada it inaugurated that it is to-day put to such an ignoble use.

Adolphustown has set the pace in many other spheres of action that tend to improve the character and elevate the citizen. The first camp meeting held in Canada was in the neighborhood of the Methodist chapel in 1805. We are not the first white men to recognize the suitability of this part of the country for camping.

The first class-meeting — the strong right arm of the Methodist Church — was held in a rudely-constructed cabin in the centre of the township. The men of an hundred years ago had the

courage of their convictions, as was illustrated by the act of one Conrad Vandusen, a tavern-keeper at the village. Before the church was built the meetings were held at his tavern. The larger the gathering, the more grog he hoped to sell. He himself became a convert to the simple faith of the missionary and took his axe and cut down his sign post and abandoned the lucrative business of dispensing intoxicants to his neighbors. His influence appears to have long outlived him, for the first temperance society in Canada was organized in his native village on January 4th, 1830, and bore upon its banner the rather imposing title of "The Adolphustown Union Sabbath School Temperance Society."

SO much in general about this grand old Township of Adolphustown could the old oaks reveal, but what shall we say in conclusion about this particular portion of it which, with its hallowed memories and endearing associations is, to many of us, the brightest spot on the face of creation? This very point, upon which we first pitched our tents in 1886, has been the centre of many a stirring scene. In the early days, when communication from one part of the township to another was by water, as it largely is even to the present day, the canoes of the messengers would frequently pass this spot, and it would serve as a convenient meeting place to while away, under the shade of these trees, a few hours in idle gossip.

GOING farther back, I believe this was a favorite camping ground for the red man, owing to the beautiful view it commands, the good fishing grounds near by, and the excellent shelter afforded for small craft in the cove. I have picked up under these trees Indian relics that bore testimony of their having been here. One of these was a stone adze, used in shaping their canoes. This implement would indicate that their residence here was of a permanent character. The Indian is the child of nature, and has a keen sense of appreciation of the grand and beautiful, and we have every reason for concluding that the same features that attract us to this spot to-day endeared it to him centuries ago. How much more beautiful must it have been when the shores were lined with forests on every side!

IN times of peace this would be a delightful resort, and when the braves were engaged in bloody strife what better point of vantage from which to repel an attack or make a raid upon an invading foe?

Since the advent of the white man this has been a favorite resort for sportsmen. A crumbling shanty with rude bunks in it stood upon the ground where now stands our dining hall, and it did not disappear until the second year of our occupancy. This for a great many years afforded shelter to local sportsmen, who made this point their headquarters when hunting the wild ducks that frequented the heads of these bays in great numbers.



FOR over twenty years we have had exclusive possession. The rising generation speak of this as Le Nid Point. When we have passed away what will succeeding generations say of the strange creatures who once summered in their midst, or will our children's children be here to tell the story? Who can estimate the value and enduring quality of the friendships that have been formed beneath these trees? Here we have sought rest and recreation in its simplest form. Here we have thrown aside all restraint and have learned to know each other as we are.



THE bond that has united us so many years will not be easily severed, and to my mind the few weeks spent each year upon this Point will be fresh and green in our memories when most of our other experiences have faded away. We may tire of other friends and acquaintances, but I shall always expect a welcome greeting from members of the little circle I met at Le Nid. Though our heads may be frosted with years, and our bodies bent with infirmities, we need never expect to be too old to answer to the roll call of "the boys" from Le Nid.



